

REMARKS

Prior to entry of this amendment, claims 1-35 are currently pending in the subject application. By the instant amendment, claims 2 and 21 are amended to more particularly recite the subject matter of the present invention. Claim 34 has been amended to be rewritten in independent form. Claims 3-10, 13-20, 22-28, 30-33 and 35 have been amended for consistency. Claims 11 and 12 are canceled, without prejudice, the subject matter thereof having been incorporated into claim 2. Claim 29 is canceled, without prejudice, the subject matter thereof having been incorporated into claim 21. Claim 1 is canceled, without prejudice. Claims 2, 21 and 34 are independent.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acceptance of the drawings filed on November 28, 2001.

Applicants also appreciate the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement filed May 15, 2002. The applicants respectfully requested consideration of the IDS filed concurrently herewith.

Claims 2-10, 13-28 and 30-35 are presented to the Examiner for further prosecution on the merits.

A. Introduction

In the outstanding Office action, the Examiner rejected claims 2, 5, 10-11, 19, 21, 24 and 27-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,024,726 to Fujiwara ("the Fujiwara reference"), rejected claims 2, 4, 8, 10-11, 15, 18, 21, 23, 26 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,225,039 to Ohguri ("the Ohguri reference"), rejected claims 2, 7, 10-11 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 8-082704 ("the JP '704 reference"), rejected claims 2-6, 10-11, 16-17,

19-22, 24-25, 27-28 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 8-082704 ("the JP '704 reference"), and objected to claims 12-14, 29-32 and 34-35.

B. Art Rejections

By the instant amendment, all of the independent claims contain limitations previously presented in claims indicated as containing allowable subject matter, thereby obviating these rejections. It is respectfully requested that all of these rejections be withdrawn.

C. Allowable Subject Matter

The indication that claims 12-14, 29-32 and 34-35 contain allowable subject matter is gratefully acknowledged. Claim 2 now includes the limitations of claim 12, claim 21 now includes the limitations of claim 29 and claim 34 has been rewritten in independent form. All of the remaining claims depend, either directly or indirectly, from one of these independent claims and are believed to be allowable for at the least the reason their respective base claims are considered allowable.

D. Conclusion

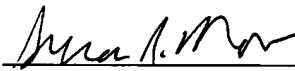
Since the cited prior art references neither anticipate nor render obvious the subject invention as presently claimed, applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-10, 13-28 and 30-35 are now in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of the instant application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to expedite resolution of any outstanding issues.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of this application is earnestly solicited, and an early and favorable further action upon all the claims is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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PETITION and
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT CHARGE AUTHORIZATION

This document and any concurrently filed papers are believed to be timely. Should any extension of the term be required, applicant hereby petitions the Director for such extension and requests that any applicable petition fee be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1364.

If fee payment is enclosed, this amount is believed to be correct. However, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1364.

Any additional fee(s) necessary to effect the proper and timely filing of the accompanying-papers may also be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1364.